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(This Associated Press story was carried in many newspapers.)

Public Is Urged To Filter Fact From Fiction On Dangers Of Tobacco

By LEWIS W. GREEN
Citizen Staff Writer

The tobacco industry—long beleaguered by medical statements and public opinion and hounded by cancer fear, had spokesmen Tuesday urging the public to keep an open mind on the smoking-health relationship at the Burley and Dark Leaf Tobacco Association convention in Battery Park Hotel.

George V. Allen, president of the Tobacco Institute, Inc. and a former Asheville Times reporter, told the gathering, "We must help the public to distinguish actual scientific fact and what flows out as opinion and theory."

Noting that tobacco has been under attack by health authorities since the New World was discovered, Allen said in an interview after his luncheon talk that the medical profession is slow to change opinions after they have been advanced. He drew a parallel between the present cancer controversy and erroneous opinion advanced during the early days of tuberculosis research.

In his address, Allen said people should reserve judgment about the matter.

"The tobacco industry is not trying to cram cigarettes down teenagers, throats, and has no quarrel with people who don't smoke. To present the tobacco industry as selfish and grasping . . . wanting to sell the last pound regardless of its impact, is a false picture and distorted image," Allen said.

"If we in the tobacco industry keep a steady nerve we can fight through and lick this latest crisis. We in the industry are more interested in finding the answer to cancer than any other group. We are American citizens and first of all we are human beings. Cancer is a great, unsolved mystery . . . and our livelihood is concerned."

Allen revealed a vast amount of research and medical talent involved in cancer research, and predicted the cause of lung cancer would be found in five years.

"In these troubled times, it seems, the public often settles for the 'easy answer' to a complex problem," Allen stated. "We all know the public is being told that the major cause of lung cancer has been found, despite the research work that does not support this belief. It is our job . . . to make sure that scientists have the oportunity to discover the real causes—and that the public not be stampeded into accepting 'easy' answers that may turn out to be misleading or false."

Allen noted that smoking is one of various factors that should be studied further. He added that "singling out tobacco is not an accurate reflection of overall research findings."

In the subsequent interview, Allen — a one-time teacher at Grace School and principal of Weaverville and Sand Hill Schools before entering government service—said the tobacco industry has poured $6.25 million into unrestricted research, and at the present time has grants totaling over $1 million a year for individual specific projects directly concerned with tobacco and health.

He reiterated and reemphasized his statements about the industry's concern with the problem, and said that medical advances have not revealed any definite proof of cancer-tobacco relationship.

"Doctors are slow to accept changes in theory because of fixed attitudes, and reputations at stake could be lowered by new concise findings," he said.

Shifting to another phase of concern, Allen said the industry fought hard to get the recent international Trade Expansion Act passed by Congress.

He cited as a major reason for this interest the fact that 30 per cent of the dark leaf crop and 40 per cent of flue cured tobacco is exported to foreign nations.

At the present time, he said, the European Common Market is carrying on restrictive practices against American tobaccos. In tariff rate reduction, our nation will have an opportunity to increase exports, and the trade bill is the only way reductions may be negotiated.

"At the present time we have a $90 million tobacco export business, and the Europeans are not going to reduce the tariff on this unless we agree to reduce some tariffs.

Tobacco progress is a model in philosophy and in its mechanics for keeping supplies in balance with demand, delegates were told earlier in a morning session.

Robert G. Lewis, deputy administrator in price and production, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, cited the responsibility and willingness of burley tobacco growers in voluntarily reducing their acreage in 1955 as the prime force in the success of the program.

Lewis pointed out that the reduction of acreage was the result of a free vote, with over 95 per cent of the burley farmers participating. And he remarked that this attitude unfortunately was not shown by farmers in other commodities.

The final morning session of the three-day meet also included a panel discussion, with Albert G. Clay, president of the Burley Auction Warehouse Association, Mt. Sterling, Ky., as moderator.

One panelist, Art G. Conover, statistician with the Economic Research Service, USDA, pointed out that the increase in cigarette consumption has slowed down considerably. Noting that the expected rate of increase in consumption is related to the population increase, Conover stated that the slow-up was largely due to the health scare news stories and releases from other public service media.

Noting a study being made by 12 experts under the direction of U. S. Surgeon General with the results to be reported in stages, Conover said that most people have adopted a wait and see attitude.

At the convention's closing address at a banquet Tuesday night, Clarence R. Eskildsen, associate administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA, said that the Common Market was a mixture of promise and problems and that when kinks are ironed out the tobacco industry would find a great future in trading there.

He said about 45 per cent of total burley exports go to six Common Market nations.

He listed as the greatest problems facing the industry: (1) shifts in tobacco taste (2) competition of other producing areas (3) trade barriers.

As encouraging factors, he listed: (1) increasing tobacco consumption (2) U. S. produces best leaf in world (3) increasing world prosperity (4) cooperative marketing development to popularize American leaf (5) constant U. S. supply to fill foreign orders.

"With the trade and Government behind the effort, I believe we will continue to hold our own in a growing world market," Eskildsen concluded.

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Duty Cited For Tobacco Industry

ASHEVILLE (AP)— George V. Allen, president of the Tobacco Institute, says it is the duty of the tobacco industry not to mislead the public on the question of smoking and health.

Speaking to the Burley and Dark Leaf Tobacco Export Association here Tuesday, Allen said, "We must help the public to distinguish between what is actually established as scientific fact and what flows out as opinion and theory.

"We all know the public is being told that the major cause of lung cancer has been found, despite the research work that does not support this belief. It is our job. . .to make sure that scientists have the opportunity to discover the real causes.

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